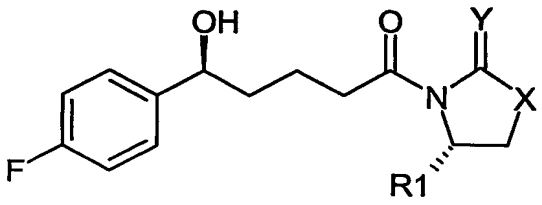
We claim:

1) A process for the preparation of an alcohol of formula 2:



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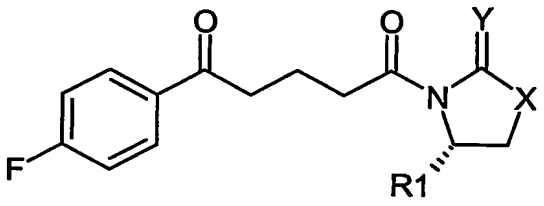
wherein X is O or S; Y is O, S or N(lower alkyl); and R is alkyl, unsubstituted or substituted phenyl, unsubstituted or substituted naphthyl or lower alkoxy carbonyl, wherein substituents on phenyl and naphthyl are selected from the group consisting of lower alkyl and phenyl;

which comprises reducing the ketone of formula 3:



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wherein X-, Y- and R1 are as defined above, with (-)-DIP chloride ((-)-β-chlorodiisopinocampheylborane).

2) A process according to claim 1, wherein X is O; Y is O; and R is alkyl, unsubstituted or substituted phenyl.

3) A process according to claim 1, wherein the compound of the formula 2 is 3-[(5S)-5-(4-fluorophenyl)-5-hydroxy-1-oxopentyl]-4-phenyl-2-oxazolidinone.

4) A process according to claim 1, wherein the reduction is carried out in a neutral organic solvent or a combination of the organic solvents.

5) A process according to claim 4, wherein the organic solvent is selected from the group consisting of chloroalkanes such as methylene dichloride, chloroform, carbon tetrachloride and ethylene dichloride; carbocyclic aromatics such as toluene and benzene; ethers such as methyl tert-butyl ether, diethyl ether and isopropyl ether; heterocyclic compound such as

tetrahydrofuran; dimethylformamide; dimethylsulfoxide; alkanes such as pentane and hexane; and acetonitrile.

6) A process according to claim 4, wherein the organic solvent is selected from the group consisting of methylene dichloride, chloroform, carbon tetrachloride, ethylene dichloride, toluene, benzene, methyl tert-butyl ether, diethyl ether, isopropyl ether, tetrahydrofuran, dimethylformamide, dimethylsulfoxide, pentane, hexane and acetonitrile.

7) A process according to claim 6, wherein the organic solvent is selected from toluene, diethyl ether, isopropyl ether, hexane, methylene dichloride and ethylene dichloride.

8) A process according to claim 1, wherein the reaction is carried out below the boiling temperature of the solvent.

9) A process according to claim 8, wherein the reaction is carried out between about -20^0C and 40^0C.

10) A process according to claim 9, wherein the reaction is carried out between about -10^0C and 10^0C.

11) A process according to claim 1, wherein at least about 0.3 moles of (-)-DIP chloride per mole of the keto compound of formula 3 is used.

12) A process according to claim 11, wherein about 0.5 to 10 moles of (-)-DIP chloride per mole of the keto compound of formula 3 is used.

13) A process according to claim 13, wherein about 0.8 to 5 moles of (-)-DIP chloride per mole of the keto compound of formula 3 is used.